

FYH

BB  
African  
Service  
budget  
slashed

OPERATIONS UNIT

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From Arnold Raphael  
LONDON, Sunday.

THE BBC African Service faces the axe. Final decisions are expected to be taken in October. Public spending is being cut right across the board by the Conservative government.

It has ordered the BBC to reduce its K80 million external budget by 10 per cent.

Precisely where the cuts fall is up to the Foreign Office.

In what language and by how many hours. The actual programme content is left strictly to the BBC.

The problem for the corporation is that it is not being singled out for economies and that the government will view the financing of external broadcasting in the wider perspective of overall official spending.

It is the totality of government policy which makes it difficult for the BBC to defend itself.

However, it has presented the Foreign Office with a series of options setting out where economies could be made. It includes the African, Arabic, Far Eastern and European services, the closing of relay stations, and the monitoring station at Caversham.

The hope, probably a forlorn one is given the mood of the Thatcher administration, is that the economy options will bring home to the Foreign Office the damage a relatively small cut of K8 million.